

CRAIGHEAD, RACHEL CARTER (1839-1924)
DIARIES, 1855-1911

Re-processed by:
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Accession Number: 89-042
Microfilm Accession Number: 661
Location: XVII-A-5

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INTRODUCTION

The Rachel Carter Craighead diaries span the latter half of the nineteenth century and the early twentieth century, and they provide an interesting look at Nashville life. Topics covered in the diary include description of school life in the 1850s, trips to places such as Mammoth Cave, New York, and Newport, as well as life in occupied Nashville during the Civil War.

The Rachel Carter Craighead diaries were originally loaned to the State Library and Archives for microfilming by Mrs. H. G. Hill, Jr., in 1979; in August 1980, Mrs. Hill made a gift of the diaries to the library. In June 1999, the collection was reprocessed and refilmed, as the original film was illegible. The collection measures 0.5 cubic feet.

Single photocopies of the unpublished writings in the Rachel Carter Craighead diaries may be made for purposes of scholarly research.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The diaries of Rachel Carter Craighead provide an excellent reflection of life among Nashville's upper class from the antebellum days to the twentieth century. She recorded much of what went on in Nashville, as seen from the windows of her house at what is now Sixth and Union. The happy life of an affluent young woman is revealed in the pages of the early volumes, in which she described her schoolwork and lessons after school in French and Italian, piano, harp, and dancing. She wrote of summer vacations that brought picnics, horseback riding, fishing, and visiting special places such as Mammoth Cave. In the winters, she ice-skated, had friends over, or sat in front of the fire reading *The Last Days of Pompeii*, Shakespeare, or the Bible.

In 1859, Rachel Carter married Thomas Craighead, a Nashville lawyer, and together they continued to live at her parents' home. Three years later she watched from her doorstep as the Union Army marched into Nashville. From that time until the end of the war, the diaries take on a more somber note. Included are reports of battles, friends killed or wounded. She lamented the lack of fuel for the fireplace, and occasionally the family had to hunt squirrels or rabbits to have meat on the table. Her father Daniel F. Carter, prominent Nashville banker, was arrested in his bank and sent to the penitentiary for refusing to take the Oath of Allegiance to the Union, and in 1863 her brother John died as a result of wounds received at Perryville. Of special interest is her account of General Grant's stay in her home in 1864. Finally, in 1865, she received news of Lee's surrender to Grant, and a few days later she recorded her shock at hearing of Lincoln's death.

The diaries of the later years tell of trying to put life back together and recover from the war. In addition to the family information, she never failed to provide a comment on current events and record her feelings about them.

Included at the end of the volumes are some miscellaneous items that consist primarily of letters and a memorial tribute to her father, who died in 1874 (See container list for detailed listing). In 1958, Rachel Buntin Wilmot created a transcription of the diaries through the Civil War. It should be noted that some incidents from the diary have been left out of the transcription, and in several places Mrs. Wilmot summarized the diary entry. A copy of this transcription is located in the collection.

CONTAINER LIST

Rachel Carter Craighead Diaries

| | |
|--------------|-----------------------------------|
| Volume I | June 1, 1856—August 13, 1856 |
| Volume II | January 8, 1857—July 17, 1862 |
| Volume III | July 18, 1862—December 21, 1862 |
| Volume IV | January 1, 1863—July 2, 1863 |
| Volume V | July 4, 1863—December 31, 1865 |
| Volume VI | January 1, 1869—December 31, 1871 |
| Volume VII | January 1, 1872—December 31, 1874 |
| Volume VIII | January 1, 1875—December 31, 1876 |
| Volume IX | March 1, 1877—January 1, 1880 |
| Volume X | January 1, 1880—December 24, 1882 |
| Volume XI | January 1, 1883—December 20, 1885 |
| Volume XII | January 1, 1886—December 11, 1887 |
| Volume XIII | January 1, 1888—August 9, 1890 |
| Volume XIV | January 1, 1891—December 18, 1892 |
| Volume XV | January 1, 1893—January 23, 1895 |
| Volume XVI | January 1, 1895—June 1897 |
| Volume XVII | January 1, 1898—November 3, 1900 |
| Volume XVIII | January 1, 1901—December 18, 1904 |
| Volume XIX | January 1, 1905—November 1, 1908 |
| Volume XX | January 1, 1909—October 28, 1911 |

Miscellaneous Items

1. Letter, author unknown, to Dear Col., June 15, 1864, relating some humorous incidents in the Union Army during battle.
2. Letter, William Driver, Nashville, Tenn., to Brig. Gen. Webster, June 24, 1864, requesting a pass to Franklin for J. Salmons, Rebecca Salmons, and Thomas Stringer.
3. Letter, Col. J. G. Parkhurst, Franklin, Tenn., to Thomas Craighead, Davidson County, Tenn., Jan. 21, 1865, telling him to submit reasons why he should not be sent within the lines of the “enemy” [Confederate sympathizers].
4. Letter, J. A. Salmons, Laramie, Wyoming, to Rachel Carter, Jan. 9, 1918, thanking her for the Christmas present, telling her of his plans for military service, and including some family news.
5. Document, James Marshall, Memphis, Tenn., Nov. 25, 1864, certifying that Thomas Craighead and others employed blacks on their farms under the compensated labor system.
6. “In Memoriam”—a tribute to Daniel F. Carter, 1808-1874.
7. Transcription of diaries through the Civil War.

SUBJECT GUIDE
Rachel Carter Craighead Diaries

| <u>Volume No.</u> | <u>Date(s)</u> | <u>Subjects</u> |
|-------------------|---------------------|--|
| I | 6/01/56- 8/13/56 | Education of a young lady: Mrs. Knox's school (fire); Classes: music: singing, harp, piano, recitations; Leisure activities of a young lady: games, questions, fox in the morning, criticism |
| | | Reading: Bible; Heirs of Padalyffe; the Hidden Paths; The Last Days of Pompeii; Presidential Career of James K. Polk. Sewing, shopping in Nashville: Wise's Mr. Naury's, Thompson's |
| | 7/22/56 | Having "Ambrotypes" made-Hughe's Gallery; ice cream-Wise's; descriptions of hair and dress styles |
| | 6/10/56 | Lectures and public events, places; the Academy-essay readings and picture, embroidery exhibits; Hotel Wallace |
| | 6/20/56 | Description of school graduation party; Building streets in Nashville |
| | 7/04/56 | Visit to the penitentiary; description of visits to Rock Rest (family home, near Franklin, KY) |
| | 7/18/56 | Discussion of medicine and treatments |
| | 7/04/56 | Visit to the Sulphur Springs (near Nashville) |
| | 8/15/56 | Trip to Mammoth Cave |
| | 9/01/56 | Visit "up on the Capital" |
| II | 1/08/57- 7/17/62 | Yankee occupation; School; Mrs. Knox, reading: Richard II; classes: Italian, French |
| | 1/09/62 | Places visited: the Panorama |
| | 4/22/62 | Places visited: Fort Tolhioffer (Zollicoffer?), St. Cloud's |

| <u>Volume No.</u> | <u>Date(s)</u> | <u>Subjects</u> |
|-------------------|---------------------|--|
| III | 10/30/62 | Places visited: the Brewery, to buy malt (Gerst?); Clothing styles |
| | 4/18/62 | Medical remedies |
| | 4/23/62 | Typhoid reports |
| | 9/10/62 | Servants: treatment of |
| | 9/28/62 | Servants: the Emancipation |
| | 4/07/62 4/16/62 | War news and home events: calvary problems and living conditions under occupation |
| | | Other war news and home events: |
| | 4/09/62 | Battle of Pittsburgh |
| | 4/11/62 | News from Corinth |
| | 4/19/62 & | |
| | 5/05/62 | Merrimac and Monitor |
| | 4/28/62 | New Orleans |
| | 5/05/62 | Yorktown |
| | 5/05/62 | Lebanon |
| | 6/10/62 | Memphis |
| | 8/1862 | Gallatin and McMinnville |
| | | Southern sentiments expressed: |
| | 4/15/62 | Comments on Lincoln's proclamation |
| | 4/23/62 | Yankee's in the graveyard |
| | 4/17/62 | Uncle Will-prisoner at Columbus, OH |
| | 4/27/62 | Impending arrest of the "vigilance committee" |
| | 4/30/62 | Prisoners taken to "old Durmont (Dumont)" |
| | 5/12/62 | Andy Johnson's Union mtg. at the Capital |
| | 6/18/62 | Marriage of a friend to a Yankee officer |
| | 9/25/62 | The Confiscation Act |
| IV | 1/01/63- 7/02/63 | Travel during the war: trip to Kentucky |
| | 12/30/62 | Burning of railroad at Elizabethtown |
| | 7/26/63 | General Mitchell-in charge of Nashville |
| | 1/26/63? | Brother buried-Mt. Olivet |

| <u>Volume No.</u> | <u>Date(s)</u> | <u>Subjects</u> |
|-------------------|------------------------|---|
| IV | 2/08/63 | Governor Johnson |
| | 2/09/63 | Fight at Fort Donelson |
| | 2/20/63 | Fire at State Hospital |
| | 2/25/63 | Taking of Lexington |
| | 2/25/63? | Negro conscription |
| | 3/25/63 | Fighting on Franklin Pike |
| | 4/19/63 | Confiscation of horses |
| | 4/21/63 | An <u>Order</u> to take the <u>Oath</u> |
| | 5/29/63 | Blockade on the streets |
| | 7/12/63 | Mention of Gettysburg |
| V | 7/04/63- 1/1865 | |
| | 7/16/63 | Larcomb's-to have pictures made |
| | 7/16/63 | Negro regiment drilling at Gallatin |
| | 7/17/63 | Back of St. Cloud's burned |
| | 9/27/63 | Trip to Shakertown |
| | 9/28/63 | Slaves running away |
| | 9/29/63 | The collapse of the Overton (Maxwell House) Hotel |
| | 10/05/63 | Confederates take McMinnville and Murfreesboro |
| | 10/17/63 & 12/16/63 | Smallpox |
| | 12/28/63 | "Rock Rest" burned |
| | 2/09/64 | Confiscation of house; General Grant moves in |

| <u>Volume No.</u> | <u>Date(s)</u> | <u>Subjects</u> |
|-------------------|----------------|---|
| V | 7-8/1864 | Eight week trip to New York |
| | 9/11/64 | Johnson calls out the militia in Tennessee |
| | 9/17/64 | Order “to illuminate” over death of Gen. Morgan |
| | 11/05/64 | Lincolnite “torch possession” |
| | 11/08/64 | Negroes allowed to vote |
| | 12/01/64 | Fort Negley |
| VI | 1/25/65 | Provost Marshall General |
| | 2/07/65 | The House of Industry |
| | 3/12/65 | Governor Johnson disgraced at Inauguration |
| | 4/05/65 | General Ewell-captured |
| | 4/03/65 | News of Richmond and Petersburg |
| | 4/08/65 | Went to the circus |
| | 4/10/65 | Lee’s surrender |
| | 4/15/65 | Reactions: Lincoln’s assassination |
| | 4/17/65 | Order to drape the house in mourning |
| | 4/1865 | Soldiers beginning to return |
| | 5/05/65 | Went to the Opera |
| VII | 1/01/69 | Matinee at Mr. Wilkins |
| | 2/03/69 | Buying a sewing machine |
| | 3/17/69 | Tea with Mrs. Polk |
| | 6/29/69 | Tom’s store burnt |
| | 8/18/69 | Trip to White Sulphur Springs |

| <u>Volume No.</u> | <u>Date(s)</u> | <u>Subjects</u> |
|-------------------|----------------|--|
| VII | 9/01/69 | Longhorns at the Lynchburgh depot |
| | 9/05/69 | New York trip |
| | 9/15/69 | Dress fashions |
| | 9/26/69 | Saw "Foster: the Spiritualist" |
| | 11/13/69 | A hop at the Maxwell House |
| | 11/28/69 | Addiction to laudanum-Bill Campbell |
| | 12/18/69 | Good description of Christmas presents and party dresses |
| | 1/03/70 | A mask party |
| | 1/14/70 | Former slaves returning in trouble |
| | 2/06/69 | Delegates to the Convention calling on Mrs. Polk – a reception |
| | 2/23/69 | A matinee – "A Doctor of Alcantara" |
| | 5/02/69 | The Memorial Society |
| | 5/13/69 | Decoration of Confederate Graves |
| | 5/15/69 | Decoration day at Mt. Olivet |
| | 5/20/69 | The fair |
| | 6/09/69 | Went to the rink |
| | 10/23/69 | Memorial sermon for General Lee |
| | 10/29/69 | Went to the dancing school |
| | 11/16/69 | The lace man came |
| | 11/29/69 | Treatment by Mrs. Ballard |
| | 1/29/70 | A mature, dramatic performance at the Hall |

| <u>Volume No.</u> | <u>Date(s)</u> | <u>Subjects</u> |
|-------------------|----------------|---|
| VII | 5/07/70 | Cow bitten by mad cat – rabies |
| | 5/11/70 | The Exposition |
| | 7/04/70 | Train fell through bridge over the Harpeth |
| | 7/16/70 | Trip to Beersheba Springs |
| | 7/16/70 | Red Sulphur Springs |
| | 9/17/71 | Fire at the Battle House and St. Cloud's corner |
| | 11/14/71 | Legislature at Mrs. Polk's |
| VIII | 1/18/75 | Governor Porter's inauguration |
| | 1/24/75 | Andy Johnson's election as U.S. Senator |
| | 2/07/75 | Mr. Autrolus - painted Tom's portrait |
| | 2/22/75 | Washington's Birthday Celebration |
| | 2-3/75 | Scarlet fever |
| | 3/22/75 | Selecting furniture at Greenfield's |